



Planning Board

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INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: Board of Appeals **Date:** March 15, 2006
From: Planning Board
Subject: Blanchard Place Comprehensive Permit – 139 Prospect Street

The Planning Board has reviewed the Blanchard Place Comprehensive Permit application for 12 residential units. The site is included in Acton's Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning District B, which allows a maximum of 5 units/acre. The project's location and proposed density is consistent with Acton's zoning designation and density requirements for affordable housing developments. The project is also consistent with the Acton Master Plan and Acton's draft comprehensive permit policy that seek to increase residential densities within and near Acton's villages and the Kelley's Corner commercial district. The site is located directly behind the Kmart Plaza; within walking distance to Kelley's Corner, the school complex, etc. The project design and scale do not detract from the neighborhood character. For these reasons, the Planning Board supports the project. Below are additional comments.

1. In lieu of constructing a sidewalk on Prospect Street, the applicant has proposed constructing a walkway to Massachusetts Ave. This would be acceptable to the Planning Board. However, we would recommend a width of at least eight feet so it can be used safely by bicyclists. There was some question as to who owned the right-of-way leading to Massachusetts Ave. last year. Have ownership issues related to the right-of-way been completely resolved?
2. To better assess the potential impacts of the project on the adjacent neighbors, the Plan should show the general locations of the structures on neighboring properties.
3. How will trash removal be handled onsite?
4. Why is there a 24 foot wide access drive? Other residential developments in Acton of the same size have 20 foot wide roadways and they seem to work well. The Planning Board would prefer a 20 foot wide drive with more landscape or green area.
5. It's understandable to have maneuvering aisles widen at the end of each aisle (near units 1 and 9) so vehicles have enough room to back up and drive out, but are such wide maneuvering aisles necessary in the rest of the project (27.5'-32' wide maneuvering aisles are proposed and the minimum required in the Acton Zoning Bylaw is 24' wide)? Once again, the Planning Board would prefer less pavement and more green space and landscaping.

6. A rip-rap embankment is proposed at the end of the maneuvering aisle near unit 1. When so much care has gone into the architectural design of the project, why have a rip-rap embankment? Why not have a retaining wall or something slightly more visually appealing?
7. A portion of the bedrock outcrop located in the northwest corner of the site will need to be removed to make room for unit 1. Notes should be added to the Site Development Plan (Sheet 5) and the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (Sheets 10 and 11) with proper instructions for blasting, such as conducting blasting surveys, obtaining Fire Department permits, and restricting blasting to reasonable weekday daytime hours.
8. If the project is approved, the Record Plan (Sheet 3) for the site should reflect the new project. The proposed condominiums should be drawn more prominently than the existing structures and the existing structures should be labeled "to be razed."
9. The Plan sheets should have a signature line for the Acton Town Clerk and a note stating the Clerk certifies that the notice of approval of the Plan by the Board of Appeals has been received and recorded at the their office and no appeal was received during the twenty days following receipt and recording of the notice.

cc: Don Johnson, Town Manager